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ACTION ARA-14

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R 101809Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5252

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 2661

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS ASEC, PINS, AR

SUBJECT EXPLOSION IN PRECINCT STATION -- RESURGENCE OF TERRORISM?

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release (☐) Excise (☐) Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: (☐) In Part (☒) In Full

(☐) Classify as ☐ (☐) Extend as ☐ (☐) Downgrade to ☐

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason ☐

1. BUENOS AIRES NEWSPAPERS 4/7 GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO AN EXPLOSION BETWEEN ONE AND 2 AM ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 6 IN THE 47TH PRECINCT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL IN WHICH THE PRECINCT DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF AND ONE OTHER OFFICER WERE KILLED. TWO OTHER PERSONS WERE GRAVELY INJURED. ALTHOUGH FEDERAL POLICE CHIEF OJEDA ORIGINATED AN INVESTIGATION, ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS, SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATIONS WERE TURNED OVER TO MILITARY AUTHORITIES. NO OFFICIAL REPORT WAS ISSUED. PRESS ACCOUNTS ATTRIBUTED THE EXPLOSION TO A HAND GRENADE ON THE PERSON OF A SUSPECT WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE STATION FOR QUESTIONING.

2. POLICE SOURCES (PROTECT) INFORMED RSO THAT SUSPECT HAD BEEN PICKED UP IN A BAR IN THE 45TH PRECINCT. AT THAT TIME HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AN OFFICER OF THE FEDERAL POLICE. HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE 47TH PRECINCT FOR QUESTIONING CONCERNING INFORMATION THAT ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS HE HAD POSSESSION OF EXPLOSIVES AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS IN HIS VEHICLE. THE FEDERAL POLICE OFFICER WITH SUSPECT IDENTIFIED HIM AS A MEMBER OF THE MILITARY AND WARNED ARRESTING OFFICERS TO HANDLE HIM CAREFULLY. CONSEQUENTLY, ALTHOUGH HE WAS

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BROUGHT TO THE 47TH POLICE PRECINCT, HE WAS NOT SEARCHED. AT THE PRECINCT, HE IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A CONTACT

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EMPLOYEE OF SIDE (SERVICIO DE INFORMACIONES DEL ESTADO - INTELLIGENCE). HE WAS ESCORTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE SUBCOMISARIO OF THE PRECINCT. SHORTLY AFTER THAT AN EXPLOSION OCCURED, KILLING THE SUBCOMISARIO, ONE OTHER OFFICER AND SERIOUSLY INJURING THE SUSPECT AND ONE OTHER PERSON. POLICE SPECULATE THAT THE EXPLOSION OCCURED WHEN SUSPECT OR HIS BAG WAS BEING SEARCHED AND ATTRIBUTE IT MOSTLY LIKELY TO AN ACCIDENT.

3. POLICE IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES ARE PUSHING THE STORY THAT SUSPECT WAS A MEMBER OF THE ERP WHO WAS BROUGHT IN FOR QUESTIONING. THIS MAY BE NECESSARY AS A COVER STORY AND ALSO TO ENSURE THAT THE DECEASED POLICE OFFICERS FAMILIES RECEIVE FULL INSURANCE FOR PENSION BENEFITS. HOWEVER, OUR SOURCES REASSURED US THIS WAS NOT TRUE AND THAT SUSPECT WAS IN FACT A CONTRACT EMPLOYEE OF SIDE.

4. RSO COMMENT: ALL ARGENTINE SECURITY SERVICES OFTEN UTILIZE CONTRACTUAL PEOPLE TO HANDLE SPECIAL OPERATIONS. THESE PERSONS SOMETIMES WORK WITH SECURITY IDENTIFICATION AND ARE RECRUITED FROM MANY DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE. THESE CONTRACT PERSONS NORMALLY WORK UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY SERVICES. HOWEVER, ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THEY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MOONLIGHTING INCIDENTS SUCH AS KIDNAPPINGS, EXTORTIONS AND MURDERS FOR PROFIT. ELIMINATING THE CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF THESE CONTRACTUAL PEOPLE HAS BEEN A CONCERN TO THE SECURITY FORCES.
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